

November 2, 2001

Dear Members of the FCC,

It has recently come to my attention that you are contemplating lifting the ban on the 1975 newspaper-broadcast cross ownership rule. I don't see the logic behind this, and since we live in a society founded upon democratic principles, I cannot see how this will do anything but erode those principles.

If the ban is lifted, then this will open the door for large corporations to control all news outlets in a town, city, or region--and who knows how far it could go from there. This would eventually create a monopoly on the dissemination of knowledge. For those who support democratic ideals, this is unacceptable as we believe that people must receive information from a variety of sources, process it themselves, and then arrive at their own conclusions.

For those who support more totalitarian points of view--in this case, allowing fewer people to determine what information the people will receive--then lifting the ban makes sense. It presumes that having fewer points of view is better for people. Of course, this limits access to the information, and thereby, limits the ability of people to make the informed decisions which are a hallmark of democratic thought. Such thought of limiting information and peoples' decision making capacity is profoundly contemptuous of democracy.

I understand that Michael Powell finds the cross ownership rule 'extremely prohibitive'. That's fair enough, but the real question is, 'Who finds it extremely prohibitive?' Surely the citizens of our country do not. I don't know many people who are running around claiming that they find it extremely prohibitive that they should be getting a variety of information from different points of view. In fact, quite the opposite is true: people already find a lack of variety and quality of information in the news extremely prohibitive.

Of course, if you are an owner of a newspaper or a television company, you will find the cross ownership rule extremely prohibitive. It limits your ability to make profits.

And that is the real issue here. Which is more important: a few individuals' ability to make profits, or the American peoples' right of access to information which leads to a better informed populous which makes better decisions. It is one of democracy versus aristocracy, and on this issue, most Americans outside of those who own media outlets support the former.

I look forward to hearing your views on this issue.

Sincerely,

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